

1 **CLAIMS**

2 What is claimed is:

3 1. A method for targeting advertisements to a plurality of set top terminals
4 during a program break, comprising:

5 assigning at least one primary advertisement to a first channel, the first channel
6 carrying a program;

7 assigning at least one alternate advertisement to one or more alternate channels;
8 and

9 switching selected ones of the plurality of set top terminals from the first channel
10 to one of the one or more alternate channels based on information related to users of the
11 set top terminals.

12 2. The method as recited in claim 1, further comprising:

13 creating a set top terminal group information indicating a group assignment for
14 each of the plurality of set top terminals;

15 transmitting the group information to the set top terminals;

16 storing the group information in the set top terminal; and

17 comparing a program being watched to the group information to determine
18 whether to switch to one of the one or more alternate channels during the program break.

19 3. The method as recited in claim 1 further comprising displaying at least one
20 of the primary advertisement and the at least one alternate advertisement.

21 4. The method as recited in claim 1, wherein the information related to the
22 users of the set top terminals includes demographic data and programs watched data.

23 5. The method as recited in claim 1, wherein the information related to the
24 users of the set top terminals includes simulated demographic data, the simulated
25 demographic data being generated by comparing programs watched data of the users to a
26 sample user profile, the sample user profile based on demographic data from a
27 statistically significant sample of users.

28 6. The method as recited in claim 1, wherein channels are switched
29 transparently.

1 7. The method as recited in claim 6, wherein a full screen mask is used
2 during a period when the channel switching occurs.

3 8. The method as recited in claim 1, the set top terminal having a first tuner
4 and a second tuner, the first tuner tuned to the first channel, and wherein the set top
5 terminal switches to an alternate channel using the second tuner.

6 9. The method as recited in claim 1, further comprising:
7 creating a set top terminal group information indicating a group assignment for
8 each of the plurality of set top terminals;
9 storing the group information at a remote location; and
10 comparing a program being watched to the group information to determine
11 whether to switch a set top terminal to one of the one or more alternate channels during
12 the program break, wherein a controller at the remote location compares the program
13 being watched to the group information.

14 10. The method as recited in claim 9, further comprising displaying at least
15 one of the primary advertisement and the at least one alternate advertisement.

16 11. A system for targeting advertising to at least one subscriber comprising:
17 means for gathering programs watched data from a subscriber;
18 a processor, operably connected to the gathering means, comprising
19 means for analyzing gathered programs watched data to determine the frequency
20 of programs watched by the subscriber;
21 means for correlating the analyzed programs watched data with categories of
22 advertisements, wherein each advertisement category includes at least one advertisement;
23 and
24 means for selecting an advertisement from the correlated advertising categories,
25 wherein the selecting means selects a plurality of advertisements, and wherein the
26 processor is a network controller;
27 a transmitter, wherein the selected advertisement is transmitted, and wherein the
28 transmitter transmits the selected advertisements on a single television channel; and

1 a display, wherein the transmitted advertisement is displayed, and wherein the
2 display is a set top terminal operably connected to a television, and the set top terminal
3 scales and repositions video, and wherein the single television channel is a menu channel,
4 and wherein when the set top terminal scales and repositions the video, the video is
5 displayed on a portion of the display displaying the menu channel.

6 12. The system of claim 11, wherein the video displayed on the menu channel
7 is targeted to individual set top terminals.

8 13. The system of claim 11, wherein the video is one of an advertisement, a
9 promotional and an infomercial.

10 14. The system of claim 13, wherein the promotional includes future television
11 programming available on the set top terminal, the future programming targeted to
12 individual set top terminals based on analysis of programs watched data, and wherein a
13 user selects a future program to view by operating a select button on a set top terminal
14 remote control.

15 15. The system of claim 13, wherein the promotional includes a description of
16 the future programming, a time and date of availability, and a cost to purchase.

17 16. The system of claim 13, wherein the promotional displayed corresponds to
18 one of a program shown on the menu channel.

19 17. A method for targeting advertisements to a plurality of set top terminals,
20 comprising:

21 creating a set top terminal group information indicating a group assignment for
22 each of a plurality of set top terminals;

23 transmitting the group assignment information to the respective set top terminals;

24 storing the group assignment information in the respective set top terminals;

25 informing the set top terminals which of a plurality of advertisement channels is
26 assigned to a television program category, the channels corresponding to the respective
27 set top terminal's group assignment information;

28 receiving, by each set top terminal, data related to the respective set top terminal's
29 assigned group;

1 determining the television program category based on a currently watched
2 program;

3 correlating the television program category with the set top's assigned group to
4 determine an advertisement channel for viewing; and

5 switching the respective set top terminals to the channel determined for viewing.

6 18. The method as recited in claim 17, wherein one advertisement channel is
7 assigned for each of eight television program categories.

8 19. The method as recited in claim 17, wherein channels are switched
9 transparently to a user.

10 20. The method as recited in claim 17, further comprising displaying
11 respective selected advertisement on the respective set top terminals.

12 21. The method as recited in claim 17, wherein the channel switched to by the
13 respective set top terminals is further based on information related to users of the set top
14 terminals.

15 22. The method as recited in claim 21, wherein the information related to the
16 users of the set top terminals includes demographic data and programs watched data.

17 23. The method as recited in claim 21, wherein the information related to the
18 users of the set top terminals includes simulated demographic data, the simulated
19 demographic data being generated by comparing programs watched data of the users to a
20 sample user profile, the sample user profile based on demographic data from a
21 statistically significant sample of users.

22 24. The method as recited in claim 23, wherein a full screen mask is used
23 during a period when the channel switching occurs.

24 25. The method as recite in claim 17, the set top terminal having a first tuner
25 and a second tuner, the first tuner tuned to the first channel, and wherein the set top
26 terminal switches to an alternate channel using the second tuner.

27 26. The method as recited in claim 17, further comprising:

28 storing the group information at a remote location; and

29 comparing a program being watched to the group information to determine
30 whether to switch a set top terminal to one of the one or more alternate channels during

1 the program break, wherein a controller at the remote location compares the program
2 being watched to the group information.

3 27. The method as recited in claim 17, wherein multiple advertisements are
4 transmitted on a single channel, further comprising:

5 pre-recording advertisements prior to transmitting to the respective set top
6 terminals; and

7 scaling and repositioning video on respective displays, the displays operably
8 connected to respective set top terminals, wherein the video corresponds to an
9 advertisement selected for viewing.

10 28. The method as recited in claim 27, further comprising performing, by the
11 set top terminal audio switching to amplify audio corresponding to a correct video portion
12 of the display.

13 29. The method as recited in claim 17, wherein multiple advertisements are
14 transmitted on a single channel, further comprising:

15 pre-recording advertisements prior to transmitting to the respective set top
16 terminals; and

17 masking video on respective displays, the displays operably connected to
18 respective set top terminals, wherein the video corresponds to an advertisement selected
19 for viewing.

20 30. A system for targeting advertising to at least one subscriber comprising:

21 a processor having means for selecting an advertisement from pre-selected
22 advertising categories, wherein the selecting means selects a plurality of advertisements,
23 and wherein the processor is a network controller;

24 means for gathering information corresponding to currently watched television
25 programs;

26 means for correlating the currently watched programs information with categories
27 of the pre-selected advertisements, wherein each advertisement category includes at least
28 one advertisement; and

1 a transmitter, wherein a selected advertisement selected by selecting means is
2 transmitted, and wherein the transmitter transmits the selected advertisements on a single
3 channel; and

4 a display, operably connected to a set top terminal, on which the transmitted
5 advertisement is displayed via a single channel, wherein the set top terminal switches
6 channels based on which advertisement is selected, the selected advertisement
7 corresponding to the correlated currently watched programs information and categories of
8 the pre-selected advertisements.

9 31. The system as recited in claim 30, wherein the set top terminal scales and
10 repositions video for the display, the video being displayed on a portion of the display
11 displaying selected advertisement.

12 32. The system as recited in claim 30, wherein advertisement video displayed
13 is targeted to individual set top terminals.

14 33. The system as recited in claim 30, wherein the advertisement is one of
15 video commercials, infomercials, and promotional video, wherein infomercials are time
16 varying video segments greater than 30 seconds.

17 34. The system as recited in claim 33, wherein the promotional includes future
18 television programming available on the set top terminal, the future programming
19 targeted to individual set top terminals based on analysis of currently watched television
20 programs, and wherein a user selects a future program to view by operating a select
21 button on a set top terminal remote control.

22 35. The system of claim 33, wherein the promotional includes a description of
23 future programming, a time and date of availability, and a cost to purchase.

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